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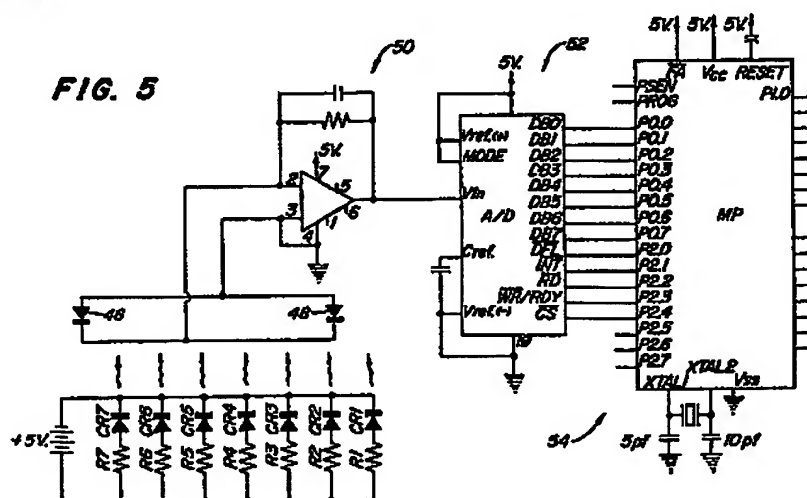
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(54) A signal processing system for an article counter.

(57) A linear array of light emitting diodes (CR1-CR7) direct a diffuse beam of radiation across the path of seeds dropping down a seed chute and onto two detectors (46, 48) connected in parallel, so that every seed produces a substantially equal area pulse in the output signal from the photo detectors. The signal is amplified (50) and applied to an analog to digital converter (52) producing digital samples at a high rate for processing by a microprocessor (54). The sensor value is subtracted from an offset value corresponding to the sensor signal when no seed is present and the difference signal is repeatedly added to an area signal. The offset value is adjusted from time to time to prevent the difference signal staying persistently negative or persistently positive. Whenever the area signal reaches a threshold value the passage of a seed is indicated and the area signal is decremented by an estimated, area value corresponding to one seed. This estimated area value is adjusted from time to time so as to avoid long term drift in the area value, thereby maintaining the estimated area value accurately representative.

FIG. 5



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A SIGNAL PROCESSING SYSTEM FOR AN ARTICLE COUNTER

This invention relates to a signal processing system for an article sensor for sensing and counting articles such as seeds flowing in a chute in a seed planter, as set forth in the introductory part of claim 1.

Optical seed sensors in which a seed interrupts a radiation or light beam are in the art. Such systems are described in US 4,163,507; US 3,537,091; US 3,928,751; US 3,723,989; US 4,166,948; US 3,974,377; and US 4,246,489. For a number of reasons, such seed sensors have been inaccurate. One problem has been the spatial non-uniformity of the light source and/or of the light detectors so that signals generated by the light detectors vary, depending upon what portion of the light is interrupted. Means are described below which overcome this problem but the present invention is concerned with a different problem arising in the processing of the sensor signal. In the prior art it been customary either to compare the sensor signal with a threshold to determine when an article is present (e.g. US 4,166,948) or to derive a pulse from the sensor signal by a differentiating circuit (e.g. US 4,163,507). In either event the system is liable to count a plurality of seeds simultaneously traversing the light as a single seed.

An alternative signal processing system, in accordance with the introductory part of claim 1 is known in the art in US 900 718, wherein an integrated signal is periodically discharged by charges to provide an article count. However no automatic adjustment of these charges is made in dependence on changes in average article size. It is necessary to perform a calibration operation periodically and manually adjust a resistor which determines the size of the decrementing charge.

The object of the present invention is to provide an improved processing system which can adjust automatically to changes in particle size.

The signal processing system according to the invention is characterized as set out in claim 1.

As will be described below, the system is arranged to compensate automatically for changes in the steady-state output of the detector and compensates automatically for gradual changes in average article or seed size.

The system be used to determine the time spacing between the articles for use in testing of planter seed metering devices.

The system can be arranged to ignore articles too small to be the ones monitored.

The sensor itself preferably includes an array of infrared LEDs extending across one side of an article or seed conduit. The array generates a substantially diffuse and uniform radiation beam which is detected by planar photo diodes which extend across the opposite side of the conduit. A pair of oppositely facing mirrors extend between the array and the photo diodes and reflect the LED radiation back into the conduit. Slits between the array and the conduit and between the conduit and the photo diodes narrow the beam which the articles or seeds traverse and prevent extraneous radiation from impinging upon the photo diodes.

With the diffuse, uniform and extended radiation beam produced by the LED array, all articles or seeds passing through the detector have nearly equal effect on the amount of radiation received by the photo diodes, even when multiple articles or seeds are tightly bunched together, even when multiple articles pass simultaneously through the beam, and even when one article is (as viewed perpendicularly to the array) in the partial "shadow" of another article which is between the one article and the array. The signal from the photo diodes has a substantially linear relationship to the total amount of radiation which falls on them, and thus, also has a similar (but inverse) relationship to the quantity of articles or seeds which interrupt the beam inside the detector.

The signal from the photo diodes is processed by an electronic unit which includes a current-to-voltage converter, an A/D converter and a microprocessor. The microprocessor executes an algorithm which accurately counts the articles which pass through the beam by repetitively integrating a value derived from the signal from the photo diodes. The algorithm compensates for changes in the steady-state signal produced by the photo diodes when no articles are in transit through the beam, and determines the number of articles in groups of articles which simultaneously pass through the beam. The algorithm also compensates for gradual changes in average article size.

The invention will now be described, in more detail, by way of example and with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a sectional side view of a beam-type article or seed sensor;

Fig. 2 is a partial sectional view taken along line 2-2 of Fig. 1, with parts removed for clarity;

Fig. 3 is a view of the photo diode mounting plate looking towards the LED array with the photo diodes removed;

Fig. 4 is a side view of one of the radiation transmitting windows of the sensor of Fig. 1;

Fig. 5 is an electrical schematic of a signal processing system embodying the present invention;

Fig. 6 is a signal timing diagram illustrative of signals which can be produced by transit of seeds through the sensor of Figs. 1 - 4; and

Figs. 7a - 7e contain a logic flow diagram of the signal processing algorithm executed by the signal processing unit of Fig. 5.

An article or seed sensor 10 includes a conduit 12 which forms an article or seed flow passage 14 and which receives a sensor module 16. Sensor module 16 includes a top 15 and a base 20, each having rectangular openings 22 and 24 which register with the seed flow passage 14.

The sensor module 16 also includes opaque end plates 26 and 28 (see Fig. 2), opaque side plates 30 and 32, mirrors 34 and 36, and glass windows 38 and 40, all held in grooves on the inner surfaces of the top 18 and base 20.

The side plate 30 supports an array 42 (at least 3 and preferably 7) of radiation generators CR1 - CR7. Various known radiation emitting devices could be suitable, but infrared light generators are preferred because of the dust-penetrating ability of infrared radiation. A suitable device is the Siemens No. SFH 407-3 GaAs infrared light emitting diode (LED). Preferably, plate 30 is a PC board with conductive strips forming electrical connections with the LEDs CR1 - CR7 mounted thereon.

As best seen in Fig. 2, this array of LEDs extends substantially across the entire width of the seed flow path 14 and transversely to the direction of seed flow which is downwards, viewing Fig. 1. The radiation beam generated by each LED has a wide angular dispersion approaching that of a point light source mounted on a planar surface. Thus, the beams from adjacent pairs of the LEDs intersect with each other well before they reach the nearest window 38. This assures that all areas in the seed flow path between windows 38 and 40 are illuminated.

The end plate 32 is preferably made of opaque black plastic and has a rectangular recess 44 which receives a pair of flat planar detectors or photo diodes 46 and 48 for generating electrical signals in linear response to radiation received thereby. End plate 32 also includes a longitudinal slot or aperture 45, which has a width which is smaller than a typical dimension of the articles or seeds being sensed, (preferably 1 mm wide). Thus, slot 45 permits only a portion of the radiation from LED array 42 to impinge upon detectors 46 and 48. The slot reduces the amount of ambient radiation (other than from array 42) which impinges upon detectors 46, 48. Slot 39 in window 38 narrows the angular spread of beam B to prevent the beam from reflecting off of articles or seeds which are outside of a small portion of the volume surrounded by mirrors 34 and 36 and windows 38 and 40.

Any detector which is responsive to the radiation generated by array 42 is suitable; however, in the case where infrared LEDs are used, then photo diodes, such as Type No. SP-852S made by Centronic, Inc., or the equivalent, are preferred. The end plate 32 and photo diodes 46 and 48 are positioned parallel to and spaced apart from the array 42 so that seeds traveling through seed passage 14 must pass between the array 42 and the photo diodes 46 and 48, thus varying the amount of radiation received thereby. The photo diodes 46 and 48 thus form a planar radiation detector which extends transversely with respect to the seed flow path across the longer dimension of the rectangular openings 22 and 24.

The radiation reflecting mirrors 34 and 36 are positioned parallel to each other on opposite sides of the seed flow path. Each mirror extends from an edge of side plate 30 to an edge of side plate 32. The mirrors 34 and 36 are preferably silvered or reflectively coated on the sides facing away from the seed flow path so that the reflective coatings will not be damaged due to abrasive contact with seeds.

Viewing Fig. 2, radiation from LEDs CR1 to CR7 which would otherwise be directed out of the path traversed by the seeds is reflected back into the seed path by mirrors 34 and 36. This has an effect similar to having the array 42 extend laterally beyond the plane of mirrors 34 and 36. The array 42 and the mirrors 34 and 36 cooperate to form a substantially diffuse, uniform and essentially extended radiation beam which enables the present detector to, in essence, "look behind" one seed to sense a seed which would otherwise be in the shadow of a seed which is closer to array 42.

The glass window 38 is spaced apart from and parallel with respect to the LED array 42 and is transparent to the infrared radiation emitted thereby and has its inward facing surface in line with an inner wall 50 of the conduit 12. The window 38 extends from mirror 34 to mirror 36. As best seen in Figs. 1 and 4, window 38 has an opaque coating or mask 37 on the side nearest the LED array 42. A longitudinal gap 39 in the mask 37 forms a slit aperture, preferably around 1 mm wide, through which the radiation from array 42 is transmitted. The gap 39 extends the full length of window 38 between mirrors 34 and 36.

The window 40 is positioned parallel to the window 38 on the opposite side of the seed flow passage 14. The transparent glass window 40 has a radiation-blocking opaque mask 41 on the side facing away from seed passage 14. A longitudinal gap 43 in the mask 41 forms a slit aperture, preferably around 2 mm wide, through which the radiation from LED array 42 is transmitted. The gap 43 also extends the full length of

window 40 between mirror 34 and 36.

As best seen in Fig. 5, each of LEDs CR1 - CR7 is connected in series with a corresponding resistor R1 - R7 and the resistor/LED pairs are then connected in parallel to a +5 volt power supply. The two detectors 46 and 48 are electrically connected in parallel. As best seen in Fig. 2, the resistors R1 - R7 may be located in the spaces between mirrors 34 and 36 and end plates 28 and 28. The current signal from detectors 46 and 48 is received by a current-to-voltage amplifier 50. Preferably, amplifier 50 includes an operational amplifier (such as an RCA No. CA 3160), a 44 pf feedback capacitor C1 and a 562 kOhm feedback resistor. Amplifier 50 provides an analog voltage to the Vin input of conventional analog-to-digital converter 52 (such as a National Semiconductor ADC 0820). A/D converter 52 provides an 8-bit digital signal (representing the voltage at Vin) to the P0.0 to P0.7 inputs of microprocessor (micro) 54 (such as an Intel 8051). The A/D converter 52 starts an A-to-D conversion in response to a flag signal received at its WR /RDY input.

The micro 54 is supplied with a 12 MHz frequency from crystal oscillator 56. This frequency is divided internally to provide a 1 MHz machine instruction frequency. A timer (not shown), which is internal to the micro 54, counts the machine cycle frequency and generates a flag signal every 100 micro-seconds.

The micro 54 causes a new A/D conversion to be performed by converter 52 and executes an algorithm or instruction set every 100 micro-seconds in response to the occurrence of the flag signal.

The algorithm or program executed by micro 54 is best understood with reference to the signal timing diagrams of Fig. 6 and to the logic flow diagrams of Figs. 7a - 7e.

Turning first to Fig. 6, the upper waveform is typical of an oscilloscope trace of the voltage at the Vin of A/D converter 52 when articles such as ball bearings are passed through the detector 10. The signal pulses at 60, 68 and 70 are representative of the signal produced by a single article passing through the detector 10. The signal pulses at 64, 66, 74 and 76 are representative of 2 articles passing through the detector 10. Pulse 74 is produced when the 2 articles pass sequentially, one immediately following the other. Pulse 64 is produced when the second article enters the radiation beam before the first article leaves it. Pulses 64 and 66 represent situations where 2 articles pass through the detector nearly simultaneously, or in very close proximity to each other, regardless of the orientation of the article grouping. Pulse 62 is produced by 3 articles passing nearly simultaneously through the detector 10. Pulse 72 is produced by 4 articles passing nearly simultaneously through the detector 10. The paranthetical numbers inside the waveform pulses are proportional to the area circumscribed by the pulses in arbitrary units. These waveforms illustrate that the area circumscribed by each is related to the number of articles which produce the waveform.

It should be noted that a differentiating-type counter would probably incorrectly interpret pulses 62, 64, 66 and 72 as being produced by 1, 1, 2 or 3, and 3 articles, respectively, whereas, these pulses are actually caused by groups of 3, 2, 2 and 4 articles, respectively. The following signal-processing algorithm correctly interprets these pulses as being caused by article counts of 3, 2, 2 and 4, respectively.

Turning now to Figs. 7a - 7e, the algorithm begins at step 100 by setting a HALF_UNIT value equal to 1/2 of a UNIT value which is initially equal to 768 to represent an initial estimate of the typical area circumscribed by the signal pulse produced by passage of a single article through the sensor apparatus. Such a pulse is shown at 60 of Fig. 6. Then, step 102 causes the algorithm to pause until the internal timer generates a flag signal at 100 micro-second intervals. Upon generation of the flag signal, step 104 causes A/D converter 52 to perform a conversion and input a new digital Vin value (INPUT) into the micro 54. Then, in step 106, a SIGNAL value is set equal to OFFSET - INPUT, where OFFSET represents the possibly slowly varying steady-state level of Vin (normally 4 volts) when no seeds are interrupting the beam B. Thus, when a seed is in the beam B, the SIGNAL value will normally be positive and will represent the vertical depth of the Vin signal (see Fig. 6) at each sampling instant relative to the normal or steady-state value of Vin when no seed is in the beam B.

However, the SIGNAL may be negative if no seed is present and if the OFFSET value is lower than the current steady state Vin level. In this case, step 108 directs the algorithm to steps 136 - 144. In step 136, an DNTIME timer is initialized to a value representing a 12 msec interval. Step 138 decrements an UPTIME timer. Step 140 routes the algorithm to step 150 if the UPTIME timer has not counted out; otherwise, in step 142, the OFFSET value is incremented by 1 binary count. Finally, step 144 sets the UPTIME timer to a 3 msec value. Thus, the OFFSET value will be incremented if the SIGNAL value remains negative for more than 3 msec.

If SIGNAL is not negative, then step 108 directs the algorithm to step 110 which determines if SIGNAL = 0. If yes, it means that no seed is present and that the current OFFSET value appears proper and steps 146 and 148 set the UPTIME and DNTIME timers to values representing 3 milliseconds and 12 milliseconds, respectively. If no, then it means it is possible that a seed or seeds are in the beam B.

In step 112, the UPTIME timer is set to a 3 millisecond value. The DNTIME timer is decremented in

step 114. Then, step 116 determines if the DNTIME timer value is greater than zero. If no, it means that SIGNAL has been positive for 12 milliseconds and the OFFSET value is adjusted by 1 digital count in step 118, and the DNTIME timer is again set to a value representing 12 milliseconds. If in step 116 the DNTIME counter is greater than zero (which means that SIGNAL has been positive for less than 12 milliseconds), or
 5 after step 120, the algorithm proceeds to step 122.

In step 122, a PULSE value (initially zero), is numerically integrated by adding to its previous value the current SIGNAL value. Thus, the PULSE value represents an area circumscribed by the graphical representation of the Vin signal pulses shown in Fig. 6.

Step 124 determines whether SIGNAL equals a digital count of 2 or 1. If not, it means that SIGNAL
 10 must be greater than 2 since steps 108 and 110 have already determined that SIGNAL is non-negative and non-zero. In this case, it means that a seed or seed group has begun or remains in transit through the beam B and the algorithm proceeds to step 126 where a P1.1 flag (initially zero) is set equal to 1. Then, step 128 determines whether the area value PULSE is greater than or equal to the HALF_UNIT value (which represents 50% of the typical area of the signal pulse produced by transit of a single seed.) If PULSE has
 15 not attained this 50% area value, then the algorithm returns to step 100 for updating of the SIGNAL value in step 106 and further integration of the PULSE value in step 122. However, if PULSE exceeds the 50% area value, then step 130 causes the signal at micro output port P1.0 to toggle to indicate transit of a seed through the sensor. Next, step 132 increments a QUAN value (initially zero) which represents the total number of seeds in seed group which may be passing through the sensor. Then, step 134 sets the area
 20 value, PULSE, equal to (PULSE - UNIT) and returns the algorithm to step 100. This makes the PULSE value negative so the condition of step 128 will again be met only upon additional repetitive integration of the PULSE value by step 122 due to transit of further seed or seeds of a seed group.

Referring back to step 124, if the SIGNAL value has a digital value of 2 or 1, it is interpreted to mean that the passage of a seed or a seed group through the beam B has just begun or has just been completed
 25 (or that noise or negative drift of the bias level has occurred) and the algorithm proceeds to step 150 and further integration of the PULSE value is prevented. Step 150 determines if a P1.1 flag value (initially zero) is equal to 1. If P1.1 does not equal 1, then it means either that step 126 has not yet been executed because there is no convincing evidence (i.e., $SIGNAL > 2$) that a seed is in transit and that P1.1 was previously cleared to zero at step 151 when the last seed transit was finished. In this case, the algorithm is
 30 directed to steps 208 - 212 wherein the PULSE and QUAN values are cleared and the algorithm is returned to step 100. If, on the other hand, the P1.1 value equals 1 in step 150, then it means a seed transit is just ending and the algorithm is directed to step 151 where P1.1 is cleared.

In step 152, the area value PULSE is compared to the HALF_UNIT area value. If PULSE is less than HALF_UNIT, then the algorithm proceeds to step 160. However, if PULSE is not less than HALF_UNIT,
 35 then step 154 causes the micro output port P1.0 to toggle (as at step 130) to indicate transit of a seed through the sensor. Then, the total seed number value, QUAN, is incremented in step 156, and the PULSE value is reset to a negative value in step 158 (as in step 134).

At this point, it is helpful to understand how the value, PULSE, varies as a single seed passes through the beam B. Initially, the PULSE value will be zero. Then, as a seed transit produces a waveform, such as
 40 60 of Fig. 6, the PULSE value will be repetitively integrated by the addition of the increasing SIGNAL values in step 122 until PULSE equals the HALF_UNIT value, at which time, the Vin level reaches a minimum and the SIGNAL value reaches a maximum. Then, step 128 operates to direct the algorithm through steps 130 - 134, wherein step 134 resets the PULSE value to a negative value, typically equal to $-(HALF_UNIT)$, if the UNIT value accurately represents the area circumscribed by the waveform pulse being processed. Then,
 45 during the remainder or second half of waveform 60, step 122 integrates the PULSE value back up so that when Vin returns to its steady state value and when SIGNAL reaches zero, the PULSE value will return to zero, again assuming that the UNIT value was an accurate estimate of the total area of pulse waveform 60.

Now, if, in fact, the estimated area value UNIT, was too large, then at the end of a seed transit, the PULSE value in step 122 will be slightly negative. Thus, as described later in detail, this slightly negative
 50 PULSE value will be utilized in algorithm portion 180 to slightly reduce the TOTAL value. Since the TOTAL value is stored as a 3-byte value (each byte consisting of 8 bits) and since, by definition, the UNIT value is that which is stored in the 2 most significant bytes of TOTAL, therefore, a reduction in the TOTAL value also reduces the UNIT value, thus making the UNIT value more closely approximate the typical or average signal pulse area produced by a single seed transit. Similarly, if the estimated area value, UNIT, was too
 55 small, then the PULSE value in step 122 (at the end of pulse area integration) will be slightly positive. This will cause the algorithm portion 180 to slightly increase the TOTAL value, and will cause a corresponding increase in the UNIT value for use during the next seed transit. Thus, by adjusting the TOTAL and UNIT values, the algorithm automatically compensates for changes in the average size of seeds passing through

the sensor.

Steps 160 - 210 will now be described. To summarize, steps 160 - 210 operate to make major adjustments (if ever needed) in the estimated signal pulse area value, UNIT, so that the correct values of UNIT and HALF_UNIT will be utilized in steps 100, 128, 134, 152 and 158.

Steps 160 - 168 determine whether the QUAN value (initially zero or set in steps 132 or 156) equals 0, 1, 2, 3 or more (representing signal pulses caused by the transit of something less than a seed (QUAN = 0) or by the transit of seed groups consisting of 1, 2, 3 or more seeds, respectively).

Under normal conditions, the signal pulse which is produced most often will be that which is caused by the transit of a single article or seed through the beam B, thus QUAN will most often be equal to 1 (assuming a reasonably accurate UNIT value). In this case, step 162 will route the algorithm to a portion of the algorithm represented by 180 which has the effect of deriving an updated TOTAL value equal to the sum of the current TOTAL and residual PULSE values. Since, as previously described, the TOTAL value is related to the UNIT value, this, in effect, repetitively adjusts the UNIT value so that it continues to represent the signal pulse area caused by transit of a single seed. Then, step 182 decrements a ONES counter (initially 256 or reset to 256, at step 200). If the ONES counter is decremented to zero, then step 184 recognizes this overflow condition and routes the algorithm to steps 198 - 210 which reset the ZEROES, ONES, TWOS, THREES and FOURS counters to 256 and which clear to zero the PULSE and QUAN values so that they can be redetermined by steps 100 - 158. If the ONES counter has not overflowed, then the algorithm is directed by step 184 directly to steps 208 and 210. Thus, if the UNIT value accurately represents the estimated single seed pulse area, the algorithm will most often incrementally adjust the UNIT value (via adjustment of the TOTAL value in 180), and will continuously reset the ZEROS, TWOS, THREES and FOURS counters in steps 198, 202, 204 and 206 so that the algorithm will never execute step 178 or step 172 which either divides TOTAL by 2 or multiplies TOTAL by 2.

However, if the UNIT value is too large, then the QUAN value will most often be zero because steps 128 and 152 would prevent incrementing of the QUAN value in steps 132 or 156. In this case, the algorithm will most often be directed by step 160 to step 174 which decrements the ZEROES counter. If this situation persists, then step 174 will eventually decrement the ZEROS counter to zero, whereupon step 176 will recognize this overflow condition and will route the algorithm to step 178. Step 178 reduces the TOTAL value by 50% (for example) and thus, causes a corresponding reduction in the UNIT value. Eventually, this process will reduce the UNIT value to a level whereby single seed transits will produce QUAN values equal to 1.

If the estimated pulse area value, UNIT, is too low, then the most often occurring single seed transits can result in QUAN values of 2, 3 or more. In this case, steps 184 and 166 will route the algorithm to steps 186, 192 or 194 where TWOS, THREES and FOURS counters (initially 256 or reset to 256 in steps 202 - 206) are decremented. When any of these counters reaches zero, then steps 188, 194 or 170 will recognize the overflow condition and will route the algorithm to step 172. Step 172 multiplies the TOTAL value by 2, thus causing an increase in the estimated area value, UNIT. Otherwise, steps 188, 192 and 170 will route the algorithm directly to steps 208 and 210 and thence, back to step 100.

It has been found that it is adequate merely to double the TOTAL value (such as in step 172) regardless of which of the TWOS, THREES or FOURS counters overflows first. However, it would be possible to change the TOTAL value by different amounts, depending upon which counter overflowed first by adding separate TOTAL recalculating steps after each of steps 188, 194 and 170.

Another alternative would be to route the "NO" branch from step 162 directly to step 186 (eliminating steps 164 - 170, and steps 182 - 194) and to make the initial and reset value of the ONES counter smaller than that of TWOS counter so that under normal circumstances, the ONES counter will continue to overflow before the TWOS counter (which, in this case, would be decremented upon the transit of any seed group producing a QUAN value of 2 or more.)

At the end of this "Detailed Description" are object and source code listings of the computer program which is illustrated by the logic flow chart of Figs. 7a - 7e. The source code listing includes labels such as READ: and ADDPULSE:, which corresponds to similar labels in the flow chart. There also follows a cross-reference symbol table listing which includes various acronyms used in the flow chart and program listing.

The signal-processing algorithm described herein could be used in conjunction with another type of article or seed sensor as long as the sensor can generate a signal which varies substantially linearly with the number of articles or seeds within it.

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HCS-51 MACRO ASSEMBLER SEED21

ISIS-11 HCS-51 MACRO ASSEMBLER V2.1
 OBJECT MODULE PLACED IN :F1:SEED21.OBJ
 ASSEMBLER INVOKED BY: ASM51 :F1:SEED21.A51

LOG OBJ LINE SOURCE
 1 \$ XREF PAGELENGTH(62) DEBUG ERRORPRINT NOMACRO
 2
 3 ; THIS PROGRAM WAS LAST EDITED AT 5:16 PM ON APRIL 20, 1984.
 4 ; WRITTEN BY KENNETH FRIEND
 5
 6 ; THIS PROGRAM WILL RUN THE 8051 MICROCOMPUTER USED IN THE PLANTER SEED SENSOR.
 7

THREE_MILLISECONDS EQU 3*10
 TWELVE_MILLISECONDS EQU 12*10

UPTIME EQU R0
 DNTIME EQU R1
 QUAN EQU R2
 PULSE_HI EQU R3
 PULSE_LO EQU R4
 TOTAL_HI EQU R5
 TOTAL_LO EQU R6
 TOTAL_HI EQU R7
 TOTAL_HI EQU TOTAL_HI
 UNIT_HI EQU TOTAL_HI
 UNIT_LO EQU TOTAL_HI

TEMP: AT 30H
 OFFSET: DS 1
 SIGNAL: DS 1
 HALF_UNIT_HI: DS 1
 HALF_UNIT_LO: DS 1
 ZEROS: DS 1
 ONES: DS 1
 THOS: DS 1
 THREES: DS 1
 FOURS: DS 1
 GLITCHES: DS 2
 GLITCHES_HI DATA GLITCHES+1
 GLITCHES_LO DATA
 SINGLES_HI DATA
 SINGLES_LO DATA
 SINGLES+1 DATA
 SINGLES+1 DATA
 DOUBLES_HI DATA
 DOUBLES_LO DATA
 DOUBLES+1 DATA
 DOUBLES+1 DATA
 TRIPLES_HI DATA
 TRIPLES_LO DATA
 TRIPLES+1 DATA
 TRIPLES+1 DATA
 QUADRUPLES_HI DATA
 QUADRUPLES_LO DATA
 QUADRUPLES+1 DATA
 SEJECT

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MCS-51 MACRO ASSEMBLER
LOC  OBJ  LINE
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0000 2100      CSEG      AT      000H
0100          AJMP      START
0100 E4        ORG      100H
0101 787F      CLR      A
0103 F6        MOV      R0, #7FH
0104 08FD      MOV      BR0, A
0105          DJNZ      R0, LOOP
0106 0D        INC      UNIT_HI
0107 758C9C     MOV      T10, #256-100
010A 7589BA     MOV      TMO, #10111010B
010B 028C      SETB     TMO

INITIALIZE:
010F 7003      MOV      UNIT_HI, #03H
0111 02A3      SETB     P2.3
0113 781E      MOV      UPTIME, #THREE_MILLISECONDS
0115 7978      MOV      DNTIME, #THELEVE_MILLISECONDS
0117 858031     MOV      OFFSET, P0

;*****
; ** START OF MAIN LOOP
; ** EXECUTES AT EVERY 100 MICROSECOND TICK FROM THE TIMER.
;*****
MAIN_LOOP:
011A C3        CLR      C
011B ED        MOV      A, UNIT_HI
011C 13        RRC      A
011D F333     MOV      HALF_UNIT_HI, A
011F EE        MOV      A, UNIT_LO
0120 13        RRC      A
0121 F334     MOV      HALF_UNIT_LO, A

0123 308DFD    JNB      TFO, WAIT
0126 C28D     CLR      TFO

READ:
0128 C2A2     CLR      P2.2
012A C2A4     CLR      P2.4
012C C2A3     CLR      P2.3
012E D2A3     SETB     P2.3
0130 C3        CLR      C
0131 E531     MOV      A, OFFSET
0133 9560     SUBB     A, P0
0135 F332     MOV      SIGNAL, A

0137 401C     JC       SIG_NEG
0139 6034     JZ       SIG_ZERO

SIG_POS:
013B 781E     MOV      UPTIME, #THREE_MILLISECONDS
013D 0904     DJNZ     DNTIME, ADDPULSE
013F 1531     DEC      OFFSET
0141 7978     MOV      DNTIME, #THELEVE_MILLISECONDS
ADDPULSE:

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MCS-91 MACRO ASSEMBLER      SEED21
LOC  OBJ  LINE
0192 A3  165
0193 2C  166
0194 9E  167
0195 FC  168
0196 EB  169
0197 9D  170
0198 FB  171
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019C 7401 173
019E 253B 174
01A0 F53B 175
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01A3 351A 177
01A5 F51A 178
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01AB ED  181
01AC 13  182
01AD FD  183
01AE EE  184
01AF 13  185
01B0 FE  186
01B1 EF  187
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01B3 FF  189
01B4 4113 190
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01B8 7401 192
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01BC F53D 194
01BE E4  195
01BF 353C 196
01C1 F53C 197
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01C5 FF  200
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01C8 FE  203
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MCS-51 MACRO ASSEMBLER

SEED21

LOC	OBJ	LINE	SOURCE	
01E0	353E	222	ADDC	A, DOUBLES_HI
01E2	F53E	223	MOV	DOUBLES_HI, A
01E4	D53737	224	DJNZ	TWOS, DONE
01E7	4109	225	AJMP	TWICE
01E9	DA10	226		QUAN, QUAD
01EB	7401	227	CONT03:	A, #1
01ED	2541	228	TRIPLE:	A, TRIPLES_LO
01EF	F541	229	ADD	TRIPLES_LO, A
01F1	E4	230	MOV	A
01F2	3540	231	CLR	A, TRIPLES_HI
01F4	F540	232	ADDC	TRIPLES_HI, A
01F6	D53825	233	MOV	THREES, DONE
01F9	2109	234	DJNZ	DOUBLE
01FB	7401	235	AJMP	
01FD	2543	236		A, #1
01FF	F543	237	MOV	A, QUADRUPLES_LO
0201	E4	238	ADD	QUADRUPLES_LO, A
0202	3542	239	MOV	A
0204	F542	240	CLR	A, QUADRUPLES_HI
0206	D53915	241	ADDC	QUADRUPLES_HI, A
0209	C3	242	MOV	FOURS, DONE
020A	EF	243	DJNZ	
020B	33	244		C, TOTAL_LO
020C	FF	245	CLR	A
020D	EE	246	MOV	A, TOTAL_LO
020E	33	247	RLC	A
020F	FE	248	MOV	TOTAL_LO, A
0210	ED	249	MOV	A, TOTAL_HI
0211	33	250	RLC	A
0212	FD	251	MOV	TOTAL_HI, A
0213	E4	252	MOV	A
0214	F535	253	RLC	TOTAL_HI, A
0216	F536	254	MOV	
0218	F537	255	MOV	
021A	F538	256	MOV	
021C	F539	257	MOV	
021E	7800	258	MOV	
0220	7C00	259	MOV	
0222	7A00	260	MOV	
0224	211A	261	MOV	
		262	MOV	
		263	MOV	
		264	MOV	
		265	MOV	
		266	AJMP	
		267		
		268	END	

MCS-51 MACRO ASSEMBLER SEED21

XREF SYMBOL TABLE LISTING

N A M E	T Y P E	V A L U E	A T T R I B U T E S A N D R E F E R E N C E S
ACC	D ADDR	00E0H	123 156
ADDPULSE	D ADDR	0143H	104 107H
AROUND	C ADDR	01D0H	210 212H
AVERAGE	C ADDR	01C3H	201H
B	D ADDR	00F0H	209 210
CONF	C ADDR	0182H	153 155H
CONTO1	C ADDR	0186H	173 194H
CONTO2	C ADDR	0107H	194 217H
CONTO3	C ADDR	01E9H	217 227H
CONTIME	REG	R1	13H 71 104 106 143 147
DONE	C ADDR	021EH	154 180 214 224 234 243 263H
DOUBLE	C ADDR	0109H	218H 235
DOUBLES_HI	D ADDR	003EH	41H 222 221
DOUBLES_LO	D ADDR	003FH	42H 219 220
DOUBLES	D ADDR	003EH	40H 41 42
FOURS	D ADDR	0039H	33H 243 262
GLITCH	C ADDR	019CH	174H
GLITCHES_HI	D ADDR	003AH	35H 178 179
GLITCHES_LO	D ADDR	003BH	36H 175 176
GLITCHES	D ADDR	003AH	34H 35 36
HALF_UNIT_HI	D ADDR	0033H	27H 82 128 161
HALF_UNIT_LO	D ADDR	0034H	28H 85 126 159
HALVE	C ADDR	01AAH	182H
INITIALIZE	C ADDR	010FH	67H 59
LOOP	C ADDR	0103H	58H 123 129 139 266
MAIN_LOOP	C ADDR	011AH	117 120H
NOT_1_OR_2	C ADDR	0154H	115 117H
NOT_1	C ADDR	014FH	25H 72 95 105 149
OFFSET	D ADDR	0031H	30H 214 259
ONES	D ADDR	0036H	192 215 256H
OVERFLOWED	C ADDR	0213H	72 96
P0	D ADDR	0080H	121 130 151 163
P1	D ADDR	0090H	69 90 91 92 93
P2	D ADDR	00A0H	116 118 144 148 152H
PULSE_DONE	C ADDR	017DH	15H 112 113 122 127 136 138 155 160 169 171 206 209 263
PULSE_HI	REG	R3	16H 108 110 125 133 135 158 166 168 203 264
PULSE_LO	REG	R4	227 237H
QUAD	C ADDR	01FBH	177H 241 242
QUADRUPLES_HI	D ADDR	0042H	48H 238 239
QUADRUPLES_LO	D ADDR	0043H	46H 47 48
QUADRUPLES	D ADDR	0042H	14H 131 164 173 194 217 227 265
QUAN	REG	R2	90H
READ	C ADDR	0128H	156 162 173H
RECORD	C ADDR	0199H	99 106H
SIG_NEG	C ADDR	0175H	102H
SIG_POS	C ADDR	0138H	100 141H
SIG_ZERO	C ADDR	016FH	26H 97 109 115 117
SIGNAL	D ADDR	0032H	195H
SINGLE	C ADDR	018BH	38H 199 200
SINGLES_HI	D ADDR	003CH	39H 196 197
SINGLES_LO	D ADDR	003DH	37H 38 39
SINGLES	D ADDR	003CH	53 56H
START	C ADDR	0100H	

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Claims

MCS-51 MACRO ASSEMBLER		SEED21	T Y P E		V A L U E	A T T R I B U T E S A N D R E F E R E N C E S	
N A M E			D	ADDR	0030H	A	24#
TEMP			B	ADDR	0088H	A	87# 88
TFO			D	ADDR	008CH	A	63
THO			N	NUMB	001EH	A	9# 70 103 142 150
THREE_MILLISECONDS			D	ADDR	0038H	A	32# 234 261
THREES			D	ADDR	0089H	A	64
THOD			R	REG	R5		17# 20 183 185 212 213 252 254
TOTAL_HI			R	REG	R7		19# 189 191 202 204 246 248
TOTAL_LO			R	REG	R6		18# 21 186 188 205 207 249 251
TOTAL_MI			B	ADDR	0088H	A	65
TRO			C	ADDR	01EBH	A	228#
TRIPLE			D	ADDR	0040H	A	44# 232 233
TRIPLES_HI			D	ADDR	0041H	A	45# 229 230
TRIPLES_LO			D	ADDR	0040H	A	43# 44 45
TRIPLES			N	NUMB	0078H	A	10# 71 106 143 147
THIRTEVE_MILLISECONDS			C	ADDR	0209H	A	225 245#
TWICE			D	ADDR	0037H	A	31# 224 260
TWOS			R	REG	R5		20# 61 68 80 137 170
UNIT_HI			R	REG	R6		21# 83 134 167
UNIT_LO			R	REG	R0		12# 70 103 142 148 150
UPTIME			C	ADDR	0123H	A	87# 87
WAIT			D	ADDR	0035H	A	29# 180 258
ZEROS							

REGISTER BANK(S) USED: 0
 ASSEMBLY COMPLETE, NO ERRORS FOUND

1. A signal processing system for an article sensor which provides a signal (INPUT) which varies substantially linearly with the number of articles within the sensor, with means which perform the following processing operations:

repetitively increment an area value (PULSE) indicative of a pulse area by a value (SIGNAL) derived from the sensor signal (INPUT),

repetitively compare the area value (PULSE) with a threshold value (HALF UNIT) and generate an output signal (P1.0) when the area value (PULSE) is not less than the threshold value (HALF UNIT), and

decrease the area value (PULSE), when the output signal (P1.0) is generated, by an estimated area value (UNIT) related to the passage of one article through the sensor,

characterized in that the number (QUAN) of articles passing through the sensor a group is counted (132) and the estimated area value (UNIT) is significantly reduced (178) and significantly increased (172) when there is a high frequency of occurrences of zero and multiple values respectively of the said number

2. A system according to claim 1, characterized in that the estimated area value (UNIT) is a more significant portion of a further value (TOTAL) which is increased or reduced (180) by the rer area value (PULSE) established when the area value has been decreased by the estimated area value (UNIT) in response to the output signal (P1.0).

3. A system according to claim 1 or claim 2, characterized in that the number (QUAN) of articles passing through the sensor in a group is counted (132) and the estimated area value (UNIT) is significantly reduced (178) and significantly increased (172) when there is a high frequency of occurrences of zero and multiple values respectively of the said number (QUAN).

4. A system according to any of claims 1 to 3, characterized in that the derived value (SIGNAL) is formed by subtracting the sensor signal (INPUT) from an offset value (OFFSET) representing the steady-state magnitude of the sensor signal when no article is passing through the sensor.

5. A system according to claim 1, characterized in that the offset value (OFFSET) is incremented when the derived value (SIGNAL) is negative for a predetermined period of time and is decremented when the derived value (SIGNAL) is positive for a predetermined period of time.

6. A system according to any of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that the threshold value (HALF UNIT) is a predetermined fraction of the estimated area value (UNIT).

7. A system according to any of claims 1 to 6, characterized in that the sensor signal (INPUT) represents the amount of radiation unobscured by articles passing through the sensor and reaching a radiation detector.

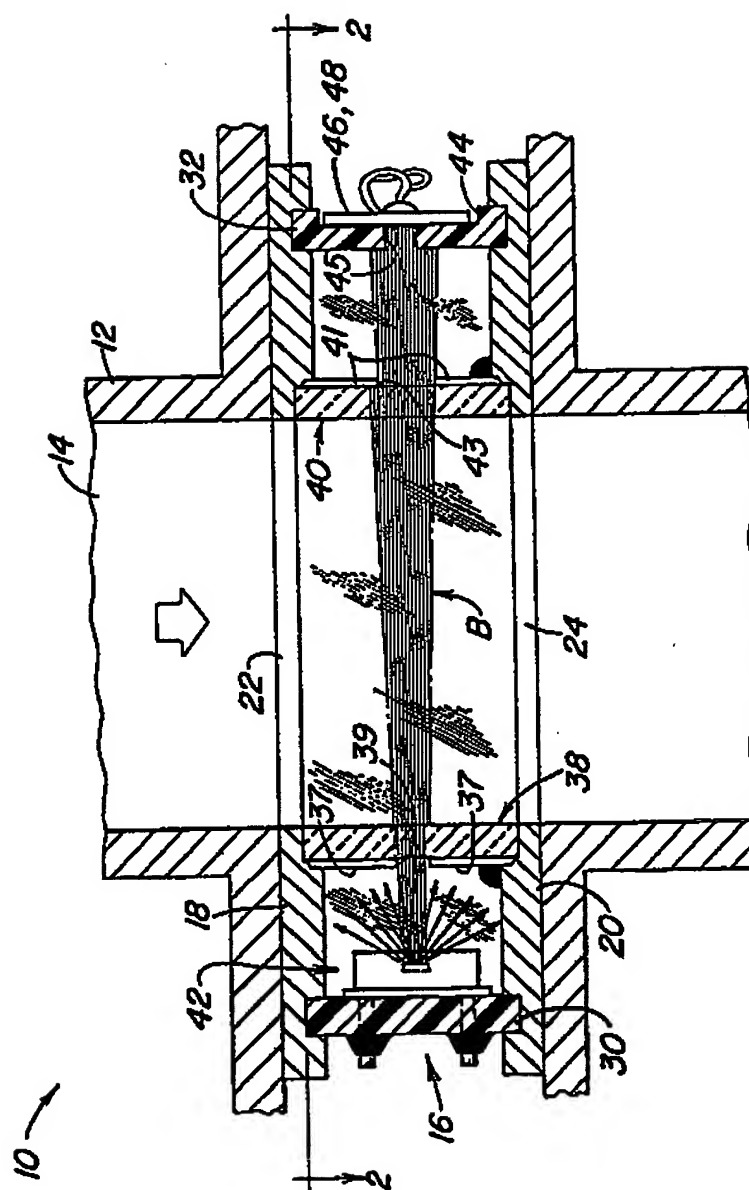


FIG. 1

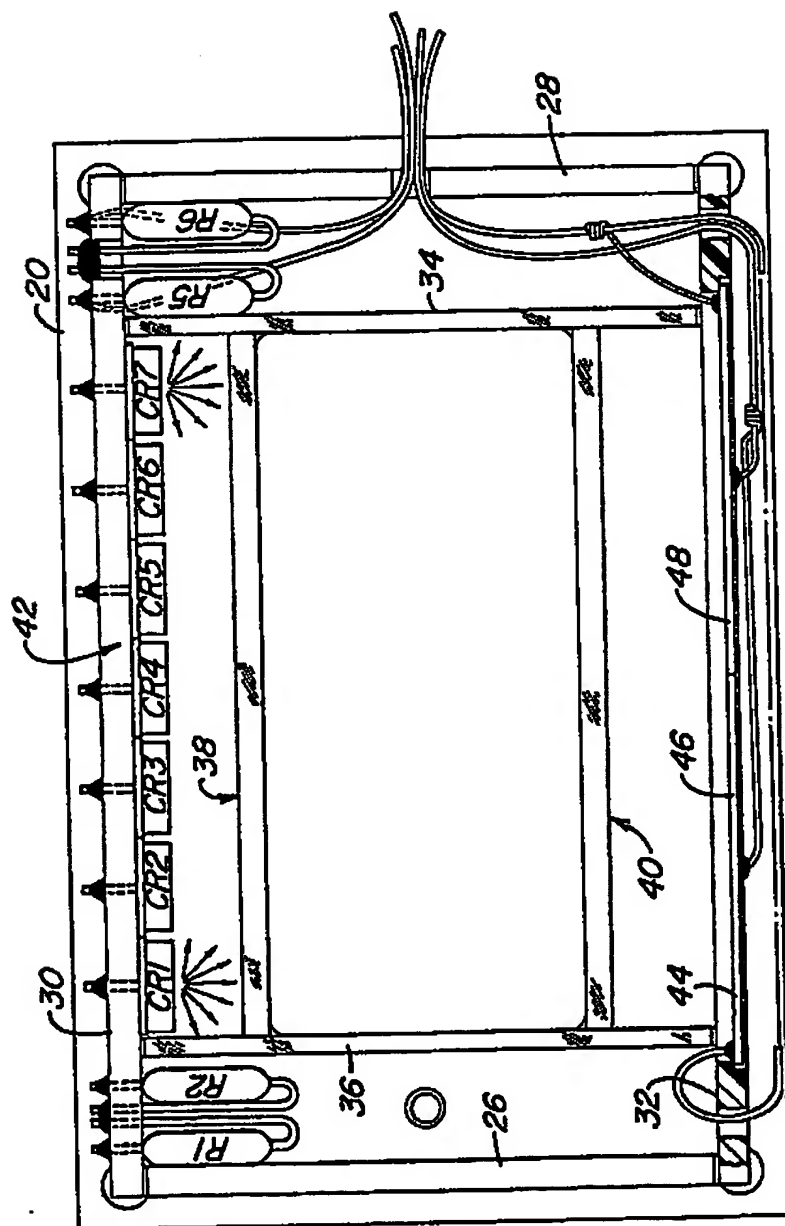


FIG. 2

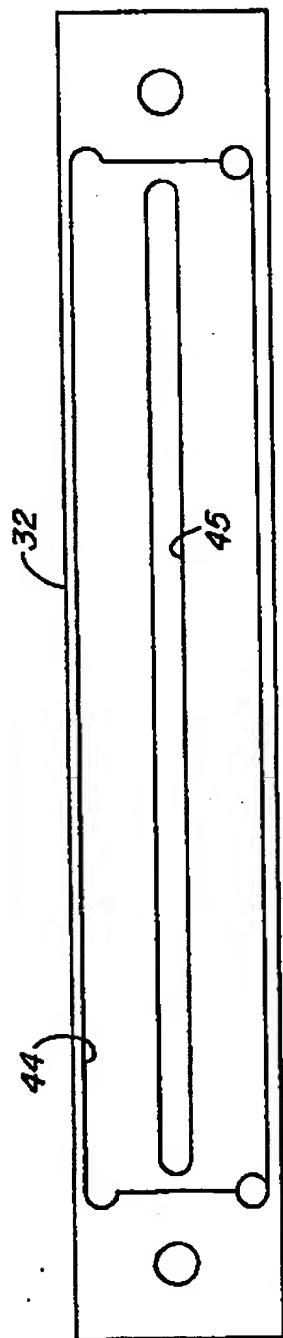


FIG. 3

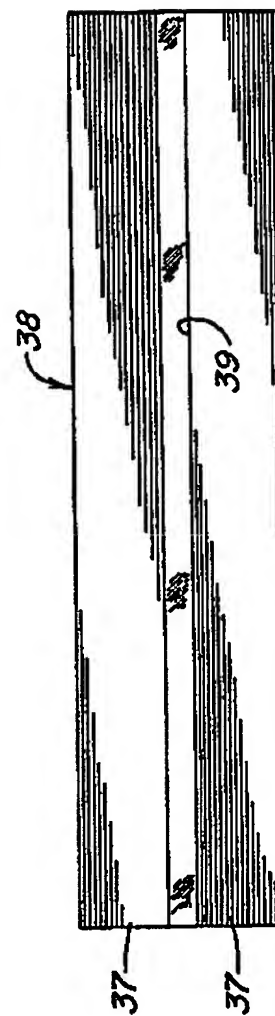
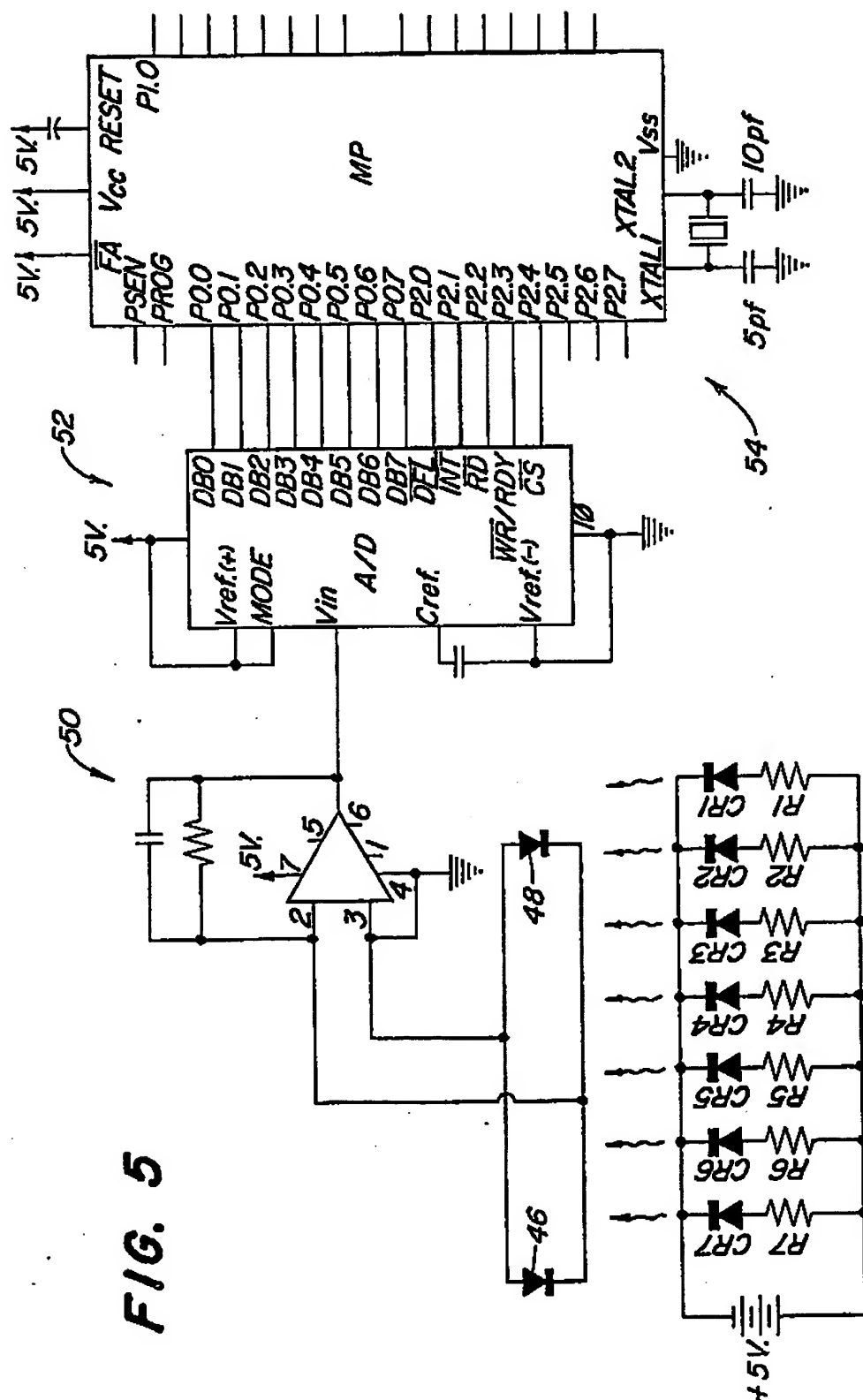
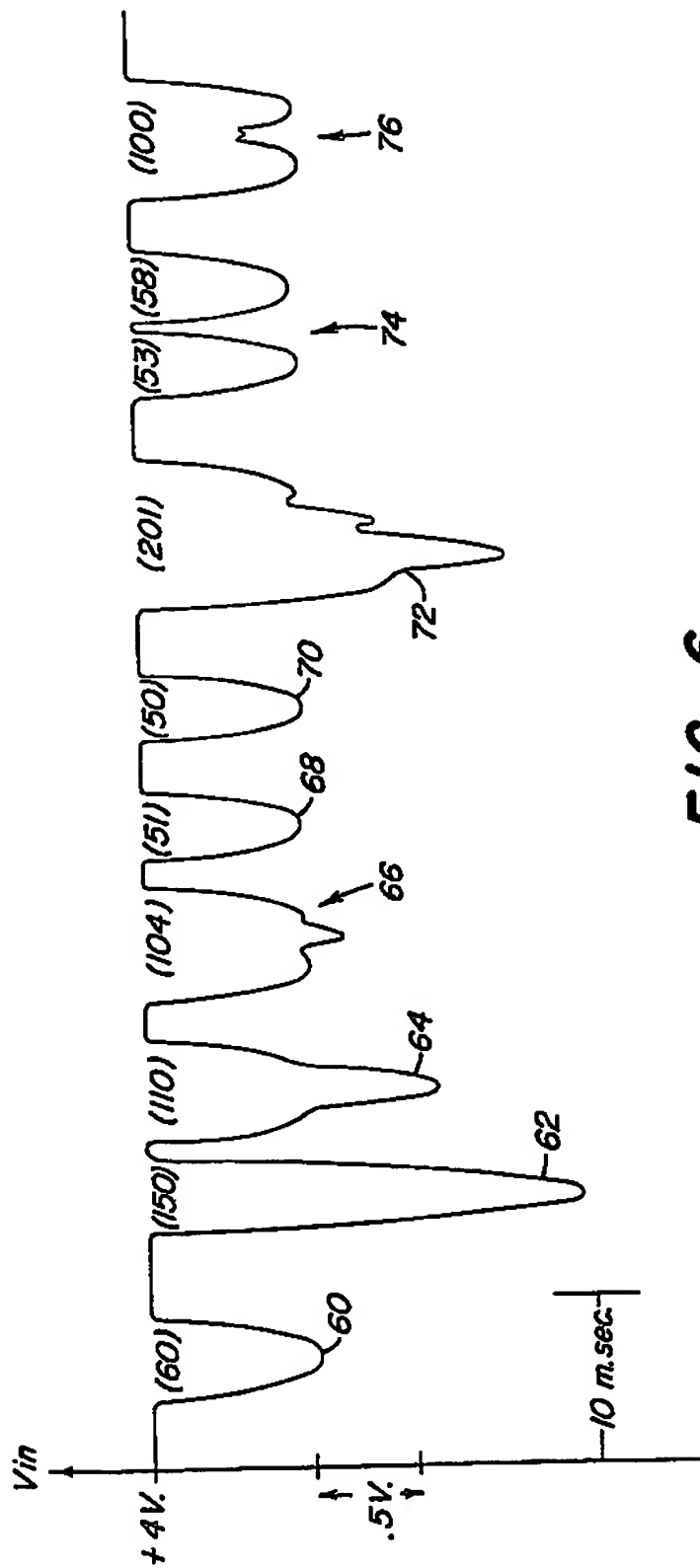


FIG. 4



**FIG. 6**

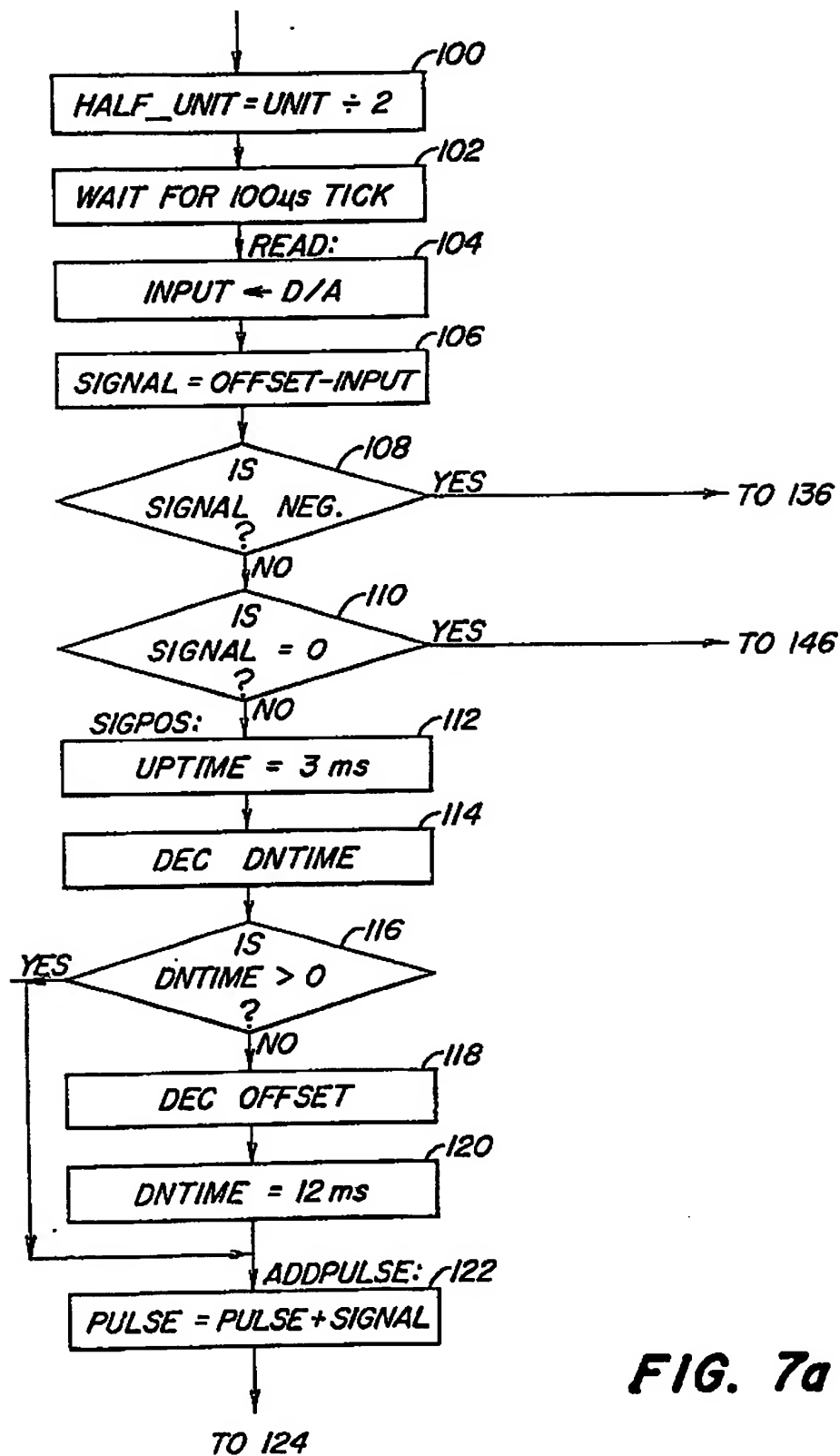
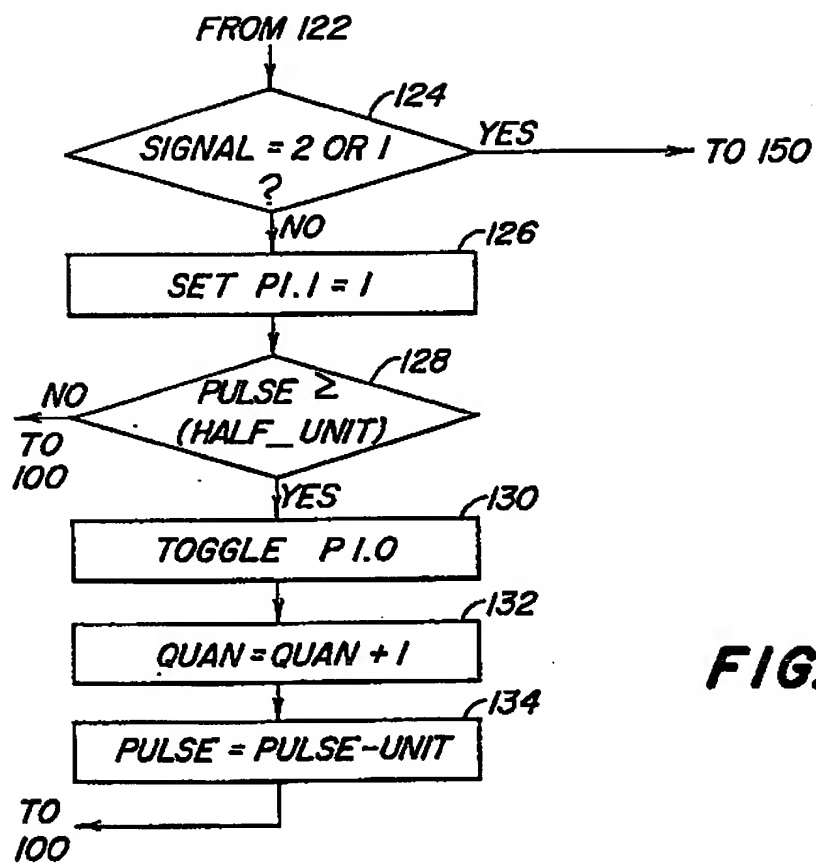
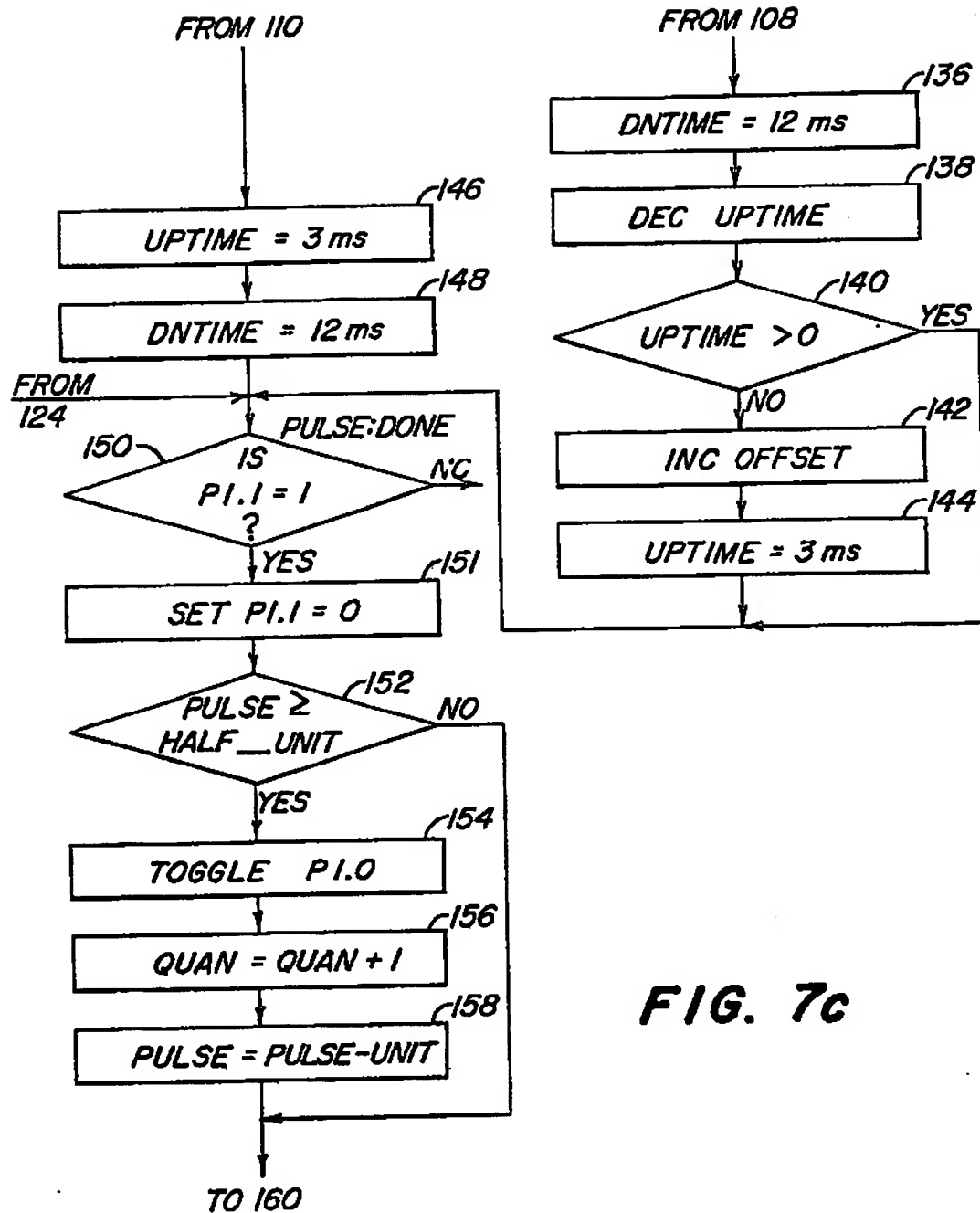


FIG. 7a

**FIG. 7b**



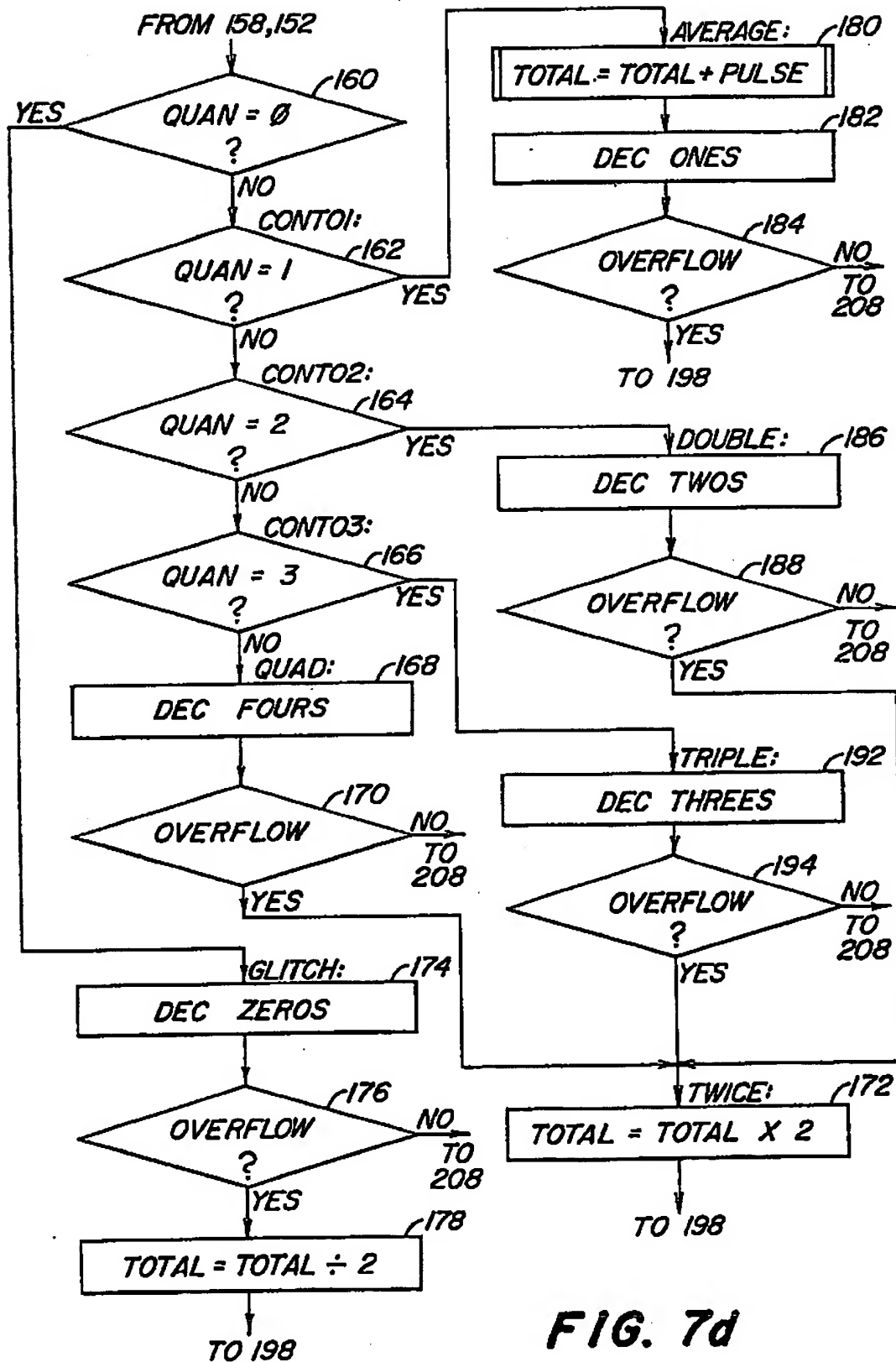


FIG. 7d

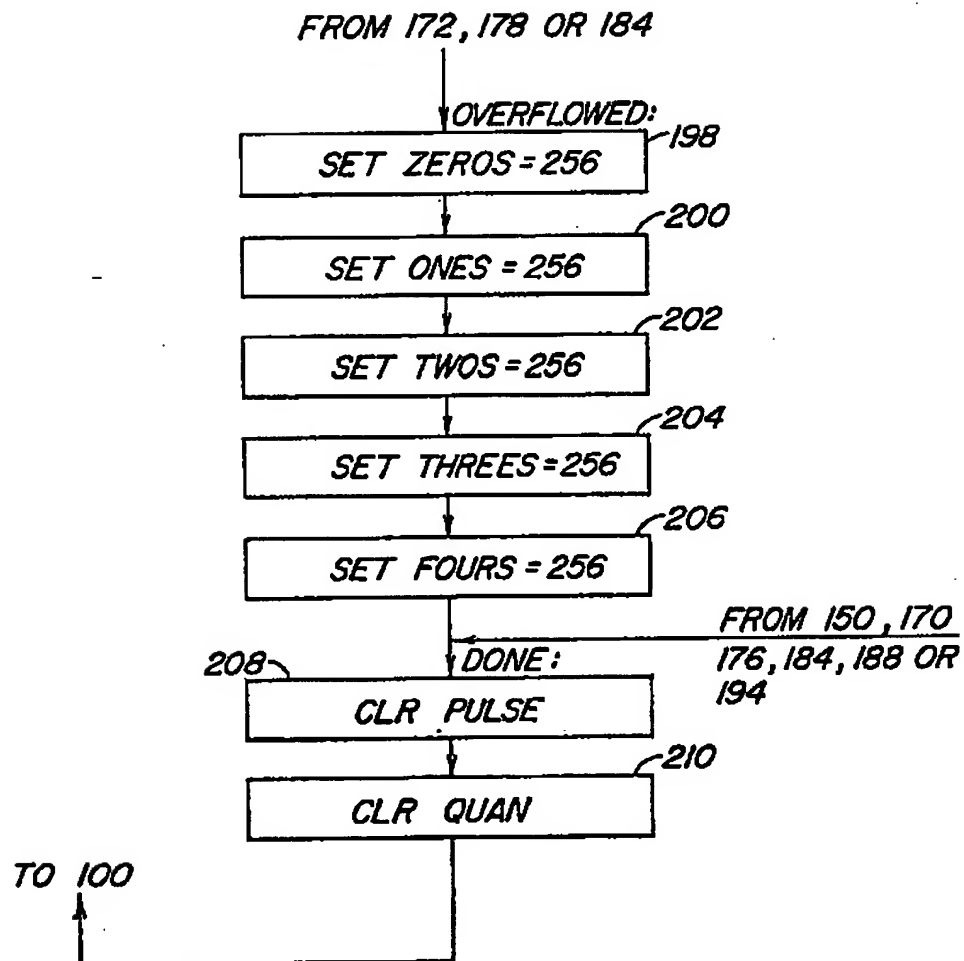


FIG. 7e

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